INTERNET TRADERS OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY:  
PROFILING RESEARCH - UPDATE

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Introduction

The Censorship Compliance Unit of the Department of Internal Affairs enforces the Films, Videos and Publication Classification Act 1993. Prosecutions by the Unit have resulted in the conviction of 324 offenders. The Unit carries out proactive Internet investigations focussed on the distribution of images of child abuse.

Research profiling the social, demographic and behavioural characteristics of a sample of 106 Internet censorship offenders was published in 2004 by the Department. This research used a questionnaire about offenders that was completed by Censorship Inspectors. Subsequent updates have added to the original sample, resulting in profiles of 185, 202 and 215 offenders, published in 2004, 2005 and 2007 (respectively). This report summarises the results of a total of 318 offender profiles.
DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF OFFENDERS

The majority of offenders in the sample resided in the main urban areas of New Zealand. The current sample revealed that the proportion of offenders residing in these areas increased by 2 per cent between 2007 and 2009 (from 52 to 54 per cent of all offenders). Similarly, between 2007 and 2009, the proportion of offenders residing in New Zealand townships also increased by 2 per cent (from 15 to 17 per cent).

Figure 1: Geographical Location of Offenders.

### ETHNICITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>No of offenders</th>
<th>% of Offenders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ European</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maori</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ethnicity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other European</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not recorded</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>307</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The profiles reveal that the majority of offenders were of New Zealand European/Pakeha ethnic identity. This finding is consistent with the findings presented in all previous DIA reports on offender characteristics, including the original 2004 report.

### AGE OF THE OFFENDER

The most common age identified since the publication of the original report was 20-24 years (Figure 2). 2007 saw the most common age identified increase to 30-34 years. This report has seen a further increase in offenders aged 45 years and older.
OFFENDER OCCUPATION

The occupations of the offender sample continues to span a wide range of professions. The most notable increase in the identified occupations seen this period is in the trade area. The proportion of offenders who were identified as being employed in a trade increased by 4 per cent between 2007 and 2009 (from 3 per cent to 7 per cent).

ACCESS TO CHILDREN

Since 2007, the proportion of offenders who worked or had frequent contact with children increased by 4 per cent (from 8 per cent to 12 per cent). This increase represents the largest change identified since 2007.

There is not yet definitive research that shows a link between those who offend online and physical offending. It is likely that if such a link exists, it will be mediated by factors other than exposure to child pornography. It seems likely that one such factor may well be access to children and opportunities to offend. Refer Wortley, R., & Smallbone, S. (2006). Applying Situational Principles to Sexual Offences against Children. In R. Wortley and S. Smallbone (Eds.), Situational Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse (pp. 7-36). New York: Criminal Justice Press.
**NATURE OF OBJECTIONABLE MATERIAL**

Given the focus of the Department, images of child abuse remain the most common type of objectionable material identified by investigators. Consistent with previous reports, images of bestiality were also identified in offender collections of objectionable material. As shown in the comparison graph of figure 5 the other types of objectionable material has not featured in the investigations.

**CRIMINAL HISTORY**

The number of offenders identified as having a previous criminal history remains extremely low. Only 27 per cent of all offender profiles since the beginning of the profiling project have been found to have recorded criminal histories.

However, of that 27 per cent, 39 per cent (25) have been found to have criminal histories involving a sexual offence against a male or female under the age of 16 years.
REACTION TO WARRANT

Most offenders freely or partly admit to their offending when confronted by DIA investigation. Partial admission by an offender usually also includes a degree of denial of wrong doing on their part and offenders often do not believe that the collection of child sexual abuse images is a serious offence.

CONCLUSION

The profiling of offenders continues to uncover a great deal of information about offenders and their offending habits. There is still a willingness of offenders to admit their offence when confronted. There has been a shift in the most common age from 20-24, in the original study, to 45-64 to date and concern about the increasing levels of offender access to the subjects of their collections. This research is ongoing and constantly being updated. This can only act to increase our knowledge and understanding of these types of offenders and the associated behaviour.